



2012-2013

Strategic Plans & Goals

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Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Mission

Statement:

To promote the growth of tourism for and in Rutherford County, in accordance with NC Session Law 2011-115.

Introduction

Welcome to the 2012-13 guide to the TDA's strategic plans and goals -- for 2012-13, we are focusing on six areas of work (in alphabetical order):

Asset Development
Internal Customer Relations
Marketing
Public Relations
Visitor Information Network (VIN)
Website and Related Internet Projects

The mission, current year emphases, and goals of each of these areas of work ties back to the TDA's mission statement as found at the top of this page.

My thanks goes to the Rutherford County – both its commissioners and employees, to TDA board and staff, to the numerous professionals the TDA contracts with, to the state offices of travel and tourism, and to our tourism stakeholders. Without the efforts of each of you, the TDA would not be able to successfully make plans and achieve our goals. With you, we hope to accomplish great things for our county.

We hope you will find this document to be both clarifying and useful to you. We also hope that, should you have any questions about anything you find here, that you won't hesitate to get involved and ask questions.

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Area of Work

Asset Development

Mission

Find and develop appropriate tourism assets in a fiscally prudent manner, in order to continually build the county's tourism economy.

Emphases for 2012-2013

This is a new work area for the TDA, and as such we are in the discovery process of what tourism assets both benefit best and be appropriate for our involvement. We have, however, identified a few projects which will likely need some level of TDA attention and support this year – the Bechtler Mint and House, and trail development. We will need to find funding sources for almost all asset development programs, and so grant funding is taking on a new importance for us, as well.

Goals for 2012-2013

- Determine how to and then deliver on Bechtler asset developments
- Build relationships with all involved in county trail development
- Determine the point person for TDA grant-seeking

Area of Work

Internal Customer Relations

Mission

To grow our local tourism economy by offering stakeholders the information, assistance, and programs which will help them grow their tourism-related businesses.

Emphases for 2012-2013

Education, opportunity, and relationships remain in the forefront of our internal customer relations work area. Our inaugural tourism conference is the centerpiece of this year's internal customer relations efforts. Also new this year is the development of website templates for our stakeholders, as well as new assistance in helping stakeholders receive the appropriate NCDOT service signs. Tourism ambassador classes, once again, continue to be an important piece of this work area.

Goals for 2012-2013

- Organize, produce and execute the 2012 TDA Alliance Conference where stakeholders can gain a stronger awareness for their important role in our county's tourism efforts while also learning the latest trends and news about this prosperous industry, thus, enhancing our county's attractiveness to media and tourism as a whole.
- As part of the VIN program, develop and implement opportunities for Rutherford County businesses to obtain visitor related and business service signing. This will be done through education of the various signing programs available and business assistance with research, administration, and implementation of a particular sign program, depending on what is most appropriate for the business.
- Continually increase the numbers (currently 100) of those who have taken the tourism ambassador course, and to offer this course four times over the coming year.
- Through the 2012 Alliance conference as well as other stakeholder outreach such as eNewsletters and more, to help stakeholders best understand how to use and capitalize on our web and related efforts.
- To create stakeholder website templates, which can work in tandem with the TDA site.

Area of Work

Marketing

Mission

Develop and maintain marketing programs that keep Rutherford County top-of-mind as a premier travel destination.

Emphases for 2012-2013

Travel by automobiles continues to be on the rise and this year we will capitalize by implementing an outdoor advertising campaign putting Rutherford County's unique attributes outside its established gateways.

Technological trends have great relevance to Rutherford County visitors, and a new social media campaign utilizing Twitter and Pinterest will be part of this year's strategies. The online digital component will be expanded through a strategic partnership that will provide geo-target and demographically targeted exposure across their network of premium sites.

Goals for 2012-2013

Through, in part, the utilization of cooperative marketing, expanded partnerships, online content and social media, to grow non-residential travel and spending via three main goals:

- Innovating the brand
- Deepening consumer engagement
- Expanding integrated media efforts

Area of Work

Public Relations

Mission

The public relations mission for Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills is to promote our county's assets – both those with a solid reputation and the increasingly popular niche markets of tourism – to regional and national media.

Emphases for 2012-2013

The 2012-2013 public relations campaign will focus on creating deeper connections with the media and thus our audiences by mirroring TDA advertising and marketing efforts. Because we offer so many diverse assets in this county, the emphasis will first target the plethora of outdoor activity from adventure to leisure. In addition, added emphasis will focus on niche markets such as the agri-tourism and heritage tourism markets, which are both strong assets in Rutherford County.

Goals for 2012-2013

The public relations goals for 2012-2013 include, but are not limited to:

- Secure strong, feature media placement in influential and popular media outlets by developing more unique stories for pitching and attracting media to our area
- Organize, produce and execute a media tour by inviting key travel and outdoors media to visit and explore our area

Area of Work

Visitor Information Network (VIN) – Information and Wayfinding/Guide Signs

Mission

VIN

Our mission is to attract, inform, direct, and connect visitors with places in Rutherford County through Wayfinding/Guide Signs and Information

VIN – Information

The Information sub-area will utilize tourism ambassadors, information stands, walk-in and mobile visitor centers, and the appropriate information-sharing facets of all TDA areas of work to fulfill the overall mission of the VIN program.

VIN – Wayfinding/Guide Signs

The Wayfinding/Guide Signs sub-area will utilize highway routing, directional signing, service signing, and other related positive guidance systems to fulfill the overall mission of the VIN program.

Emphases for 2012-2013

Our emphasis for 2012-2013 will be to further develop connections with stakeholders in order to better formulate strategy, prioritization, and value. This will be accomplished through stakeholder meetings, individual communication, and the Alliance Conference.

Information gleaned from these resources will be used to better define and refine the overall VIN Vision and Work Plan.

Another specific focus area will be the initial and strategic implementation of recommended directional signs, both in and outside of the county.

We will also focus on the design, implementation, and signing for several visitor information sites throughout the county; of particular importance are the staffed visitor information sites.

Goals for 2012-2013

- To first, complete the 2012-2013 VIN Vision and Work Plan.
Note: Please refer to this document for a detailed list of specific VIN program goals.
- After completing the initial plan, to continually refine it to better identify timelines, priorities, and workflow.
- Although the VIN Vision and Work Plan is a dynamic working document, we hope to gather enough stakeholder input to transform this plan into a consistent working document limited only by third party decisions, change in stakeholder desires, government action, or funding.

Area of Work

Website and Related Internet Projects

Mission

To optimize the presence, functionality and usability of the TDA's website. Also, to intuitive design and build new website features.

Emphases for 2012-2013

- Continue to address issues outlined in the "Open Items" document
- Launch Rutherford Events site

Goals for 2012-2013

- Address any outstanding issues
- Provide support on new projects i.e. mobile site and QR code
- Provide details for any future enhancements